



UNDERSTANDING HUMAN RIGHTS ENSURING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF ALL

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Video Transcript

[TEXT: Young African Leaders Initiative Online Training Series]

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My name is Peter Sampson and this is *Ensuring the Human Rights of All*.

In this lesson, I will focus on the following learning objectives.

First, how to think rationally about human rights globally and in your own country.

Second, ways that you can push back against the efforts to violate the human rights of others.

And finally, how to advocate for the human rights of yourself and others.

Human rights advocacy requires a change of mindset, and a break from cultural norms, traditions, and customs that encourage, fail to recognize, or tolerate violations of human rights. You should think beyond your own rights and think of the rights of those that are not in a position to fight for themselves.

It starts with acquainting yourself with current affairs in your own country, through news, social media, and other trusted sources.

Secondly, you must familiarize yourself with various human rights documents at the international, national, and regional level.

Third of all, and most importantly, it's essential that you identify needs in your community. Talk with people; ask them about their needs and concerns. Identify the marginalized populations and who has the duty to ensure that their rights are protected. Human rights advocacy involves making sure that those who have the duty to provide for and protect marginalized populations fulfill that duty to make sure that society is inclusive.

Inclusion means having everyone involved in the conversation, including the marginalized.

Marginalized populations are often put into isolation, away from the community. For example, separate systems for girls, or the physically and mentally disabled, or tribal minority groups. Human rights advocacy is based in the belief that all people are stakeholders in democracy and all members of a community must be included in guarding against human rights abuses.





Learn to think critically, to debate issues with logic and facts and to know when something is not done right. Take, for example, people living with physical or mental disability. Who has the duty to provide reasonable accommodation?

The issue of human rights has evolved internationally over time. Slavery and colonial domination, for example, were once justified as sanctioned by God. Now both are properly reviled as an unconscionable violation of human rights.

The more you marginalize people, the greater your problems. Violating human rights leads to instability in the form of economic stagnation, security threats, and breakdowns in civil society structures and democratic institutions.

The first way to prevent human rights violations is to know your own rights. This starts with understanding what human rights are and educating yourself on how to seek justice if your rights are violated.

Then you must live a life that practices what you preach. Educate people around you. An educated person in the midst of ignorant people is also an ignorant person, unless working to educate others.

You can start on an individual level. Many violations have become a thing of the past because organizations, people, and groups spoke out and took a stand against human rights abuses. You should never allow someone to do the wrong thing without protest or being unchallenged. Engage and educate those who violate human rights by staying positive and focusing on how you would bring people together.

Dedicate time to the cause of human rights. Many people sacrificed their lives in order for us to enjoy the rights we have today. Be consistent in your fight against violations of human rights. Seek redress through a competent court or platform. Bring awareness to violations through the internet, social media, blogs, community radio and television. You can use pictures, video, audio to record human rights violations. It's your responsibility to expose human rights abuses in your community, country and throughout the world. Stories of success can be powerful examples to others. For instance, the person who started the hashtag "bring back our girls" raised international awareness of the human rights violations of Boko Haram in Nigeria. As a result, for the first time, people around the world became aware of the threat of Boko Haram.

As an advocate for human rights, you must not only make people aware of your rights but also make them aware of the rights of others. Violating one person's human rights is a violation of everyone's. Speak out, politely but forcefully. Speaking in a rude tone to the violator makes the victim more prone to violations. And when you report a violation, it is your duty to follow up.

The fight for human rights is vital in the promotion and protection of individual rights. One can be an advocate for human rights by joining or starting a group in your local community. Local groups are a good way to promote human rights, as they help create awareness. Sometimes people only need to be brought together to advance the cause of human rights. Work with people to empower them to be their own best advocates.

Consider collaborating with government or non-governmental organizations working on these issues. This will help to better maximize resources, particularly with regard to finance, staff, and outreach. You can work with these organizations to collect statistics to catalog abuses, as well as inform policies to protect human rights. You can also work with them to provide assistance





for victims. Engage with communities and educate the public on violations and the obligation to elevate and defend marginalized groups. You should also support the work of human rights advocates who are fighting for a cause in which you believe.

Support initiatives to redress the causes and effects of past human rights abuses that may keep marginalized communities from emerging from historic violations. In the U.S., grassroots campaigns, like those of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and '60s, led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act that outlawed discrimination based on race. That fight for equality meant better treatment and representation for African Americans in American society.

As a responsible person, stand up for your rights and the rights of others in order to support human rights for all.

After you have completed all the units in this course at YALI.State.gov, you can test your knowledge and earn a YALI Network Certificate.

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